

Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

March 14, 2016

RE: Exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act in Environmental and Justice Communities

Dear Governor Brown,

We write to you today to express our opposition to any exemptions from our state's laws designed to protect our communities from harm. You have proposed an exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the cleanup of contaminated soils at Exide, a lead smelter near downtown Los Angeles which the state allowed to operate for decades without protective permits. Over 10,000 homes have been contaminated with lead and hundreds of thousands of people have been exposed to dangerous levels of air toxics emissions.

Exemptions from laws designed to protect the public's health harm all Californians by setting a precedent for unequal protection under the law. Environmental justice communities already bear the brutal brunt of past and present government policies which concentrate pollution in communities already reeling from over-exposure to environmental harms. We need the information which the CEQA analysis provides and the mitigations which it ensures if we are to safeguard the health of the communities we inhabit and steward.

We would oppose the establishment of less protective cleanup standards for lead in environmental justice communities than for more affluent communities. We would oppose the establishment of less protective air pollution standards for environmental justice communities. Compliance with the law which analyzes, informs, and allows us to engage in the process of protecting our communities from harm is no different.

We request that you withdraw this exemption request and that you refrain from any other attempts to pass exemptions from laws which protect the health and well being of California's most vulnerable communities.

Cordially,

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